

## Oral Presentations

## Workshop 18. The pregnancy epidemic

S37

**WS18.5 When women with CF become mothers: A qualitative study on psychosocial impact and adjustment**

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**Objectives:** Motherhood is now a realistic option for many women with CF. This study explored the psychosocial impact of becoming a mother and the adjustments made.

**Methods:** 11 women with CF (10 diagnosed <2 years, 1 in adulthood; mean age 30 years, mean FEV<sub>1</sub> 68%), who had children aged 7 months to 14 years, were interviewed about their experiences of becoming a mother (10 pregnancies, one adoption). All were in current relationships. Recruitment took place via the 'CF Mothers' internet forum. Participants were interviewed via telephone and transcriptions analysed using Grounded Theory.

**Conclusion:** The analysis revealed 3 core categories:

1. 'Living with CF' details how becoming a mother impacted physical health and treatment adherence, requiring a change in behaviour and change in the input received from the CF team (e.g. increased contact, emotional support, and conversations about managing treatment alongside childcare);
  2. 'Becoming a Mother' refers to issues common to new mothers, such as feelings of responsibility;
  3. 'Pooling Personal Resources' describes the mothers' coping strategies in managing the dual demands of child and CF care, such as the support of their partner.
- All 3 categories were related through a process of 'Balancing Mother and Child's Needs'.

Mothers acknowledged a negative impact initially on their CF care, but over time felt their adaptations had been successful, to the point that their adherence and motivation to stay well was better than before they were a mother. All felt the experience was a positive one. Further research is needed with mothers who are in poorer health and/or have less access to support than the participants in this study.